The Worthington guide to Sailing

BY UFFA FOX

BEHIND EVERY GREAT MAN
THERE'S A GREEN SHIELD Worthington

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GUIDE TO SAILING

BY UFFA FOX

UNDOUBTEDLY the most colourful figure in sailing today, Uffa Fox is a headline personality whatever he does and wherever he goes. To millions who will never get nearer to the joy of sailing than half an hour round the bay in the *Skylark*, the name of Uffa Fox is as familiar as a film star's.

But this seasoned sailor is much more than a mere figurehead. He knows ships not only from sailing them but from designing and building them too, in his own yards at that capital of yachtsmanship — Cowes. As he says in these pages which he has written especially for you, his hand is as familiar with the feel of a tiller as it was with the handles of a plough when he was a boy. In his passion for the land, the sea and the winds of heaven, he is the embodiment of the first Elizabethans in our own Elizabethan age.

Worthington and Company are justifiably proud of the great, British tradition of sailing embodied here. They are also proud of their own great tradition in brewing the very finest beer in the land — Worthington — which men who know the feel of the tiller demand, and which we are sure you will find to be one of the most pleasant rewards of an outdoor life.

NOTE: In writing this useful guide to sailing, Uffa Fox has taken as his example the Flying Fifteen. You may not aspire at first to so splendid a craft or to sailing in such open waters as the sea can offer. But whether you own a schooner or a sailing dinghy, and take her out on the high seas or along a quiet stream, this master sailor's advice is always good to follow.

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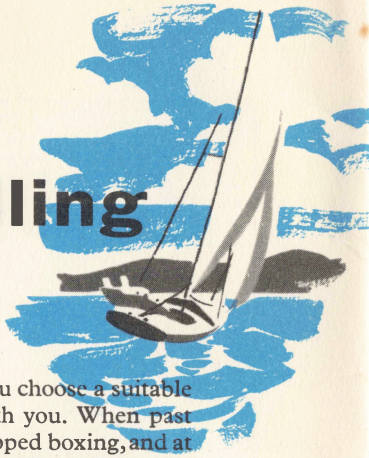


Guide to Sailing

BY UFFA FOX

SAILING is a wonderful sport, for providing you choose a suitable boat you can sail until time is no more with you. When past my prime at twenty-three years of age I stopped boxing, and at twenty-eight football and cross-country running, but sailing, like the elements you encounter and mingle with the seven seas of this earth and the winds of heaven, is ageless. You can start sailing soon after you can walk and, with the advancing years, long after you are able to walk. It is the greatest fun, for the seas on which you sail were not made by man and do not have to be maintained by him, and the wind, your driving force, flows like manna from heaven and is there whether you use it or not; even when you use it you take nothing from it and though you plough your lonely furrow through the seas and oceans once you have passed your furrow is smoothed over and no trace of it or you remains to mark your passing. Though man can stamp his ugliness on the earth, he has never and cannot ever make a mark that endures in the sea or sky, which are as fresh and as unaltered today as in the beginning and will remain so throughout all the years to come.

Therefore you must approach the sea with humble mind and heart, because once you leave the land you are as close to the face of God as you can be on this earth of ours, and this is one of the reasons why the friends you make sailing the seas are the most enduring of all; the brotherhood of the sea. When we play tennis and the elements get boisterous and blustery we can stop and dive into our homes for a cup of tea; but once you leave the land you have to endure all the Lord sends in the way of wind and weather, and those who do this for pleasure though they have many faults, also have deep down below all this a sure and steadfast foundation—a nature that endures.

Immediately you sail you open up a new world for yourself. The earth is three parts water; if you are not a seaman and sailor this divides the world for you, but if you sail and have a seaworthy vessel under you, you can, once on the water, travel to the uttermost ends of the earth.

'They that go down to the sea in ships and do their business in great waters, these men see the wonders of the Lord.' And this Guide to Sailing will, I hope and trust, open up a new world to those who read and understand.

Flying-Fifteen

Your Power the Winds

Before we sail we must have some knowledge of the power that drives our vessel. The winds of heaven, our driving force, are very simple and easy to understand.

Here in the British Isles we are in the region of westerly winds, but between September and Whitsun there are easterlies amongst these. Farther south, just north of the equator are the north-east trades and these two areas of constant winds are divided by a calm patch called the Doldrums.

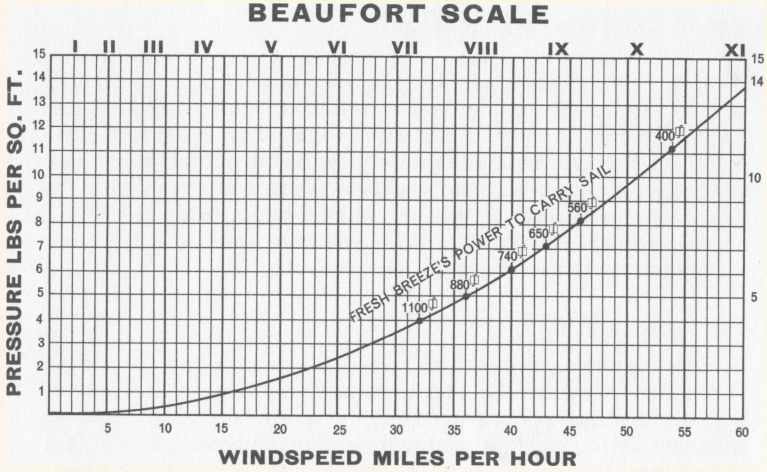
Farther south round the Cape and the Horn are the Roaring Forties, the latitude of forty south, with brave westerlies bringing great ranging seas that sweep round the world unhindered by any land.

Wind exerts a pressure on bridges, buildings and ships — in fact everything it comes in contact with — and the greater the wind's speed the greater the pressure. These speeds are set out on the Beaufort Scale, with their description from calm to gale and hurricane. The perfect sailing wind ranges from five to twenty miles an hour — a light, gentle, moderate or fresh breeze; above that speed you have to consider reefing, unless your vessel is under-canvassed or you are chasing away before the wind, in which case you reduce the wind's speed and pressure by your sailing speed.

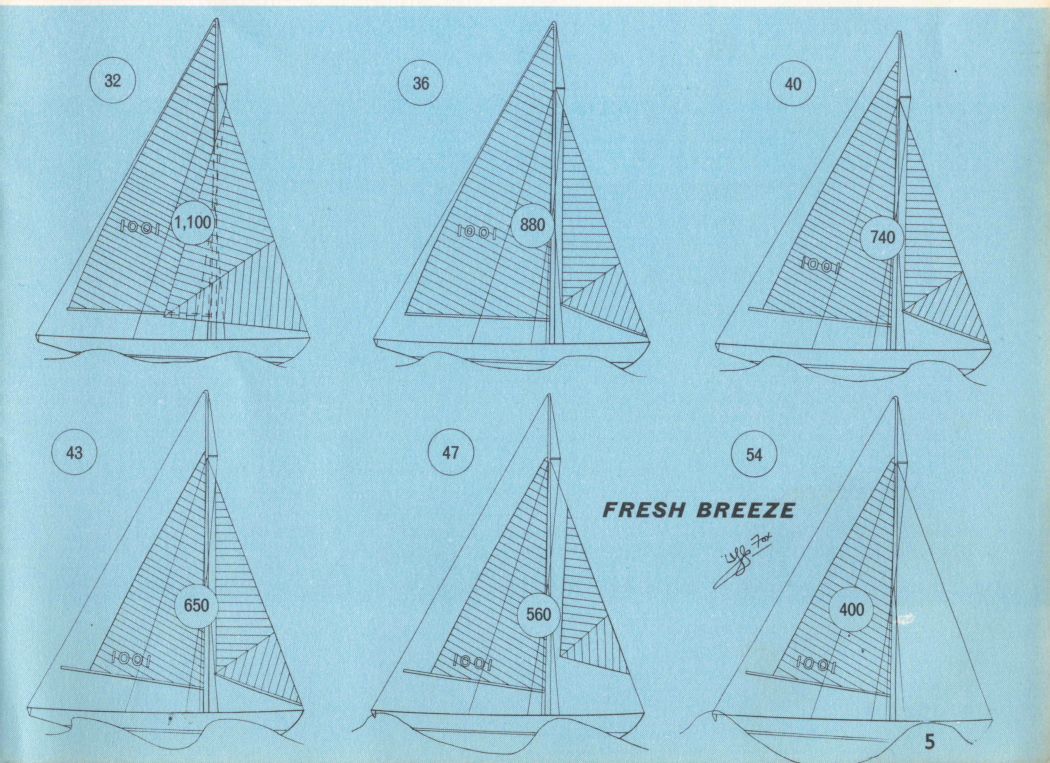
Do not bother to listen to those who say they are carrying full sail to windward in a sixty-mile-an-hour gale, as either their vessel is miserably under-canvassed or they are drawing the long bow.

Try at all times to have the right amount of canvas on your vessel to suit the strength of the wind blowing at that time. I have drawn a diagram to guide you as to the amount of sail you should carry in a well-proportioned vessel in the various wind strengths; this will not be accurate, as much depends on the vessel's stability and the amount of sail area she is fitted with, but it will be a good guide for all normally rigged craft.

The sailing season extends from May 1st until the end of September, through the longest days with the greatest amount of sunshine and joy in the weather, yet many in the south of England keep their vessels out until Christmas and sail them through the autumn months. When younger I used to keep my old schooner out throughout the winter for duck shooting at Lymington and various places along the south coast, but the winter brings heavy gales and all the problems of heavy seas, so only the experienced, and those who launch and race weekends on inland waters, should keep their vessels out through the severe winter.



In the summer months the south-westerly wind is generally gentle in the forenoon, reaching its full force — that of a good sparkling breeze — throughout the afternoon, then dying away in the cool of the evening. It is the greatest fun to sail your vessel in a brave breeze and watch her dancing through the greeny-blue sunlit summer seas.



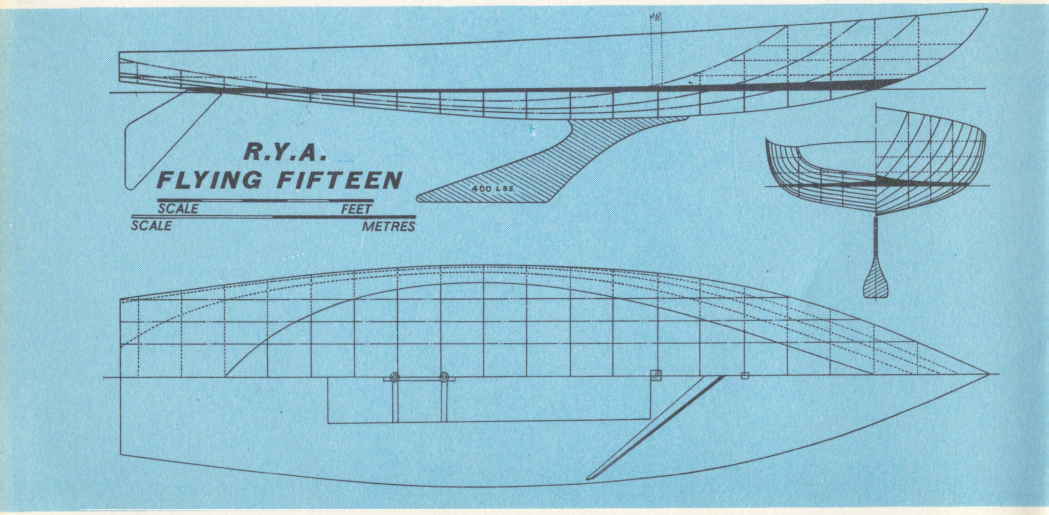
Your Choice of Ship

YOUR FIRST VESSEL should be an easy boat to sail, free from the risk of capsizing, as this enables you to devote all your thoughts to her sailing without the worry of acrobatics to keep her on her feet. First of all, children crawl and then walk; they do not start learning on a tight-rope. As it is even better for them to learn on a carpeted floor than on the hard road, so it is best to start out learning to sail in a non-capsizing keel boat. Then, once you have learnt to sail, go into the lighter, more exciting and capsizing craft.

YOUR CRAFT

Because men love, have faith and trust in their ships they are always affectionately termed 'she' and no matter what vessel you choose to sail, you love and adore her; she is to you the best ship on earth, whether small or large, wide or narrow. You grow into her ways and become her slave, and so swift or slow, buoyant or sluggish, you put your heart, courage and imagination into your vessel and become well content.

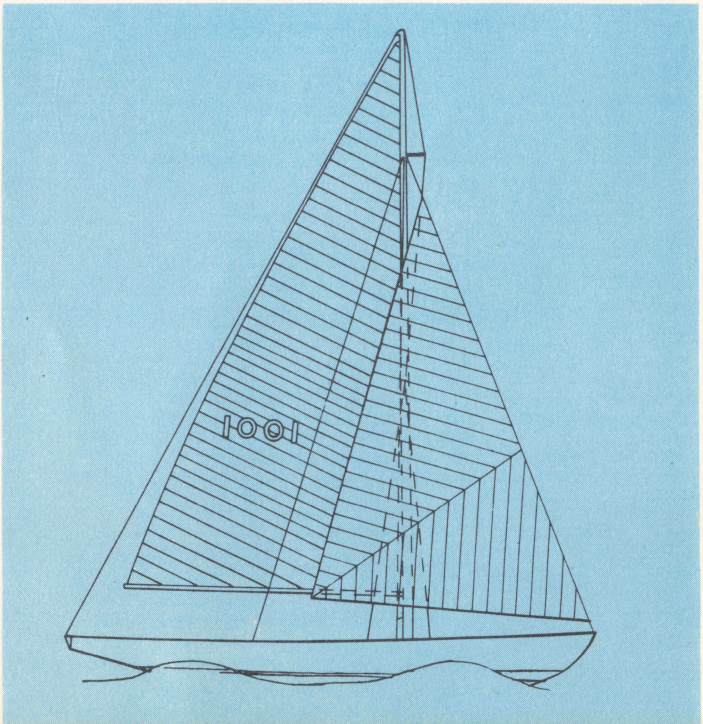
Broadly speaking vessels are divided into two classes: the drop keel, which are lively, exciting and can capsize, and keel boats that have ballast keels under them, therefore sluggish in proportion and more stable, so safer.



When you are learning to sail you should be relaxed and go quietly until you have understood the wind, its various caprices, its action on the sails, its power to make waves and to knock the most powerful vessels down on to their beam ends, and in order to do this you should start in a keel boat. Here all your thoughts are on the pure magic of sailing. Among the keel boats, the most suitable for teaching and learning sailing is the Flying Fifteen, because this, although it has the ballasted keel underneath it to prevent it capsizing, is so cut away under water that it has almost the same liveliness and brightness as that of the centre-board craft, and in addition its rudder is independent of the keel and so has the same feel. Therefore in such a boat you have the excitement of travelling fast, like you get in the centre-board boats, combined with the stability of the ballasted keel craft. It is the smallest of all the keel craft, a halfway-house between these and capsizing centre-board boats and, because it is the smallest, the cheapest of all the keel boats, the one that gives the greatest fun for the least money.

Setting Sail

BEFORE we can put to sea we must set our sails. Our mainsail in these days is triangular in shape and so we should haul this out along the boom until all the wrinkles in the foot disappear but no more, because sails can easily be over-stretched on their spars. Once we



have lashed out along the boom we must take one or two turns round it, so that we can take the strain off the foot of the sail and the top of the boom, or track; otherwise we can tear the sail, split the boom or strain the track.

Then we hoist the mainsail by its halyard, and again we haul this up until the wrinkles have disappeared out of the luff, but again no more. The mainsail is now set.

The jib is generally hanked or clipped on to a wire forestay. Though this is also a three-cornered sail, it most often has no boom on its foot, and so again we hoist this until the wrinkles disappear — or if, as is usual, it has a wire luff, until the strain on the luff of the jib and that on the forestay are equal. Now we are ready to sail, so away we go.

The sails cannot drive the vessel if they are flattened-in fore and aft, for then all they do is to heel the boat and force her sideways without driving her ahead or astern. They must make an angle to the fore-and-aft line of the vessel to drive her ahead, and as this angle is controlled by the sheet a rope is attached to the clew (the after lower corner) of the sail. You ease away on the main and jib sheets to the maximum for the course you are sailing, for the farther off the vessel's centre-line you can set your sails the more they drive the vessel ahead and the less they press her.

Reaching Wind Abeam

REACHING

This is the easiest point of sailing. You have the wind abeam, that is, at 90° or a right-angle to your course. You should sail to and fro with the wind abeam, as if you were stretching a new sail, for an hour or so to get the hang of the tiller, with its effect on the boat and on her steering, and also the effect of hauling in and easing off the sails. Because the tiller is a bar leading forward direct from the head of the rudder, which is hinged at its fore edge on pintles, you move the tiller opposite to the way you wish the head of the vessel to go. When you put the fore end of the tiller to port you divert the rudder to starboard and this in turn, because of the rush of water on it, turns the head of the boat to starboard (to the right). Similarly, when you put the fore end of the tiller to starboard you deflect the rudder to port and the boat turns to port. This is the opposite of the wheel, for when you steer with the wheel you turn it to the direction you want your ship's head to go, exactly as with a motor-car. Although this all sounds difficult, it is just as simple as steering a bathchair, for though the steering tiller of a bathchair is in the front you still have to put it to port to go to starboard. Within minutes of sailing, either with a wheel or a tiller, you settle down to doing the right thing automatically.

And here it is just as well to remember that the speeds of a boat are comparable to those of a bathchair, almost always the pace of a person walking or running. I have spent hours ploughing behind horses and as you watch the ploughshare cutting through and turning over the ground you have a tremendous feeling of speed and excitement. This is so with a boat, for though she is only travelling from a walking pace, four miles an hour, to that of a trotting horse, sixteen miles an hour, it exhilarates you as your vessel like a ploughshare cuts her lonely furrow through the sea, for this parting and turning of the water gives an impression of terrific speed.

Our ship makes a lot of fuss as she cuts her way through the ocean, just as we do as we excitingly and breathlessly rush through this life of ours; but once she has made her furrow in the sea there is no mark left within minutes to tell of her passing, any more than there is to tell of the allotted span we endure and enjoy upon this earth.

The rudder in turning the vessel also slows her, so the less we use our tiller and rudder the better speed we shall make and the quieter and easier our boat will travel. A bad helmsman fidgets and fusses with the tiller, and because his ship is not steady on her course her sails are continually at different and inefficient angles to the wind, which slows the vessel. Moreover, she travels a zigzag, so longer, course. The good steersman uses only the minimum helm quietly and firmly as required, with the result that his vessel sails faster and travels a shorter distance.

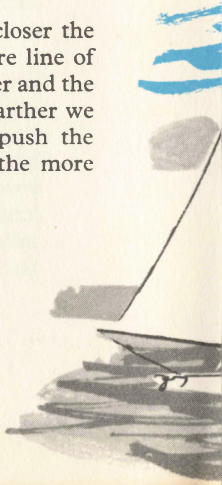
Trimming Sails

AS WE REACH to and fro, steering steadily on a point of land, a cloud in the sky or on a compass course, we continually ease the sheets to the utmost to get the full drive ahead from them; for the wind is never true in strength or direction and is rather like the breathing of a man, fairly regular but not constant.

First of all, once we are on course, we ease the foremast sail, the jib, out and out until it flutters on its luff and then we pull it in until it is asleep. Then once this sail that is cutting into clean air is adjusted perfectly, we adjust to it the mainsail and all other sails aft, in their order from bow to stern. The only way we can find the perfect adjustment is to ease off and off until they flutter, and then haul in until they, too, are asleep on the wing.

After we have this perfect adjustment we continually, at short intervals, ease the jib until it shakes, just to check on the wind's direction. Once we discover we can ease the jib we can also ease the other sails behind it, again in their regular turn from forward to aft. As the wind pulls ahead and the jib flutters we must haul this in a touch and the other sails to suit. So all the while we are reaching to and fro across the wind, first left, to port, then right, to starboard. As well as learning the feel and the handling of our craft, we also learn to trim her sails to perfection.

We soon discover that the closer the sails are hauled in to the centre line of the vessel the more they heel her and the slower she goes, whereas the farther we ease them off the faster they push the boat ahead on her course and the more upright she sails.



If it is a fine, sunny day the sails and their halyards naturally grow and expand in the warmth of the sun and through being used, so we must watch for this and set up a little on each halyard as required. The burgee, or racing flag, is set aloft on halyards and though this has been set taut and proud at the beginning of the day's sail, it will be noticed in fine weather that the halyards stretch and so the flag sags or droops until we once more set it taut on its halyards.

The exact opposite happens when it comes on to rain or the dew of eventide descends, as then everything gets taut and twangy, and we must ease away on halyards and outhauls to keep the sails from being over-stretched and strained out of shape. We must again remember the flag halyard, as this shrinkage does harm if not taken care of; because just as when we camp out we have to ease up the guy ropes of our tent for rain and heavy dews, so must we ease the strains on our sails in wet weather and at night.

Most cruising vessels have a tack tackle for setting down the luff of their head sails and mainsail, as it is so much easier to hoist the sails to their full extent and then let gravity help you set them taut. When cruising, I let go the tack tackles at sunset and gravity still keeps the sails set well; then as the dew and dampness of the night comes so the shrinkage is taken care of and the boom of the mainsail and the tacks of the other sails gradually creep up the mast and stays, thus automatically taking care of all shrinkage.

After one or two hours of reaching to and fro, so that we have the feel of the vessel and understand the steering and sheeting, it is just as well to leave this, the easiest point of sailing — reaching with the wind on the beam, called 'A soldier's wind' by sailors — and start on another point of sailing.

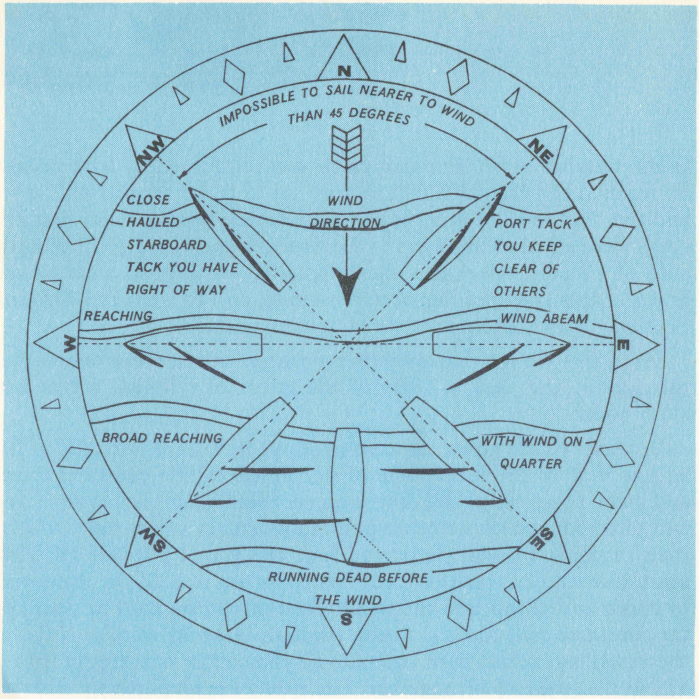
Close Hauled Going to Windward

WE ARE NOW TRYING to make every inch of ground to windward, yet still keeping our boat travelling fast through the water, for the closer we go into the wind the slower she goes, until when she is head to wind she stops and goes astern. This explains why close-hauling is a difficult though not a dangerous point of sailing, for it is exacting to get the utmost out of a vessel by going as high into the wind as we can without losing way.

The average boat sails 45° from the wind, so that when she goes about on the other tack she sails at a right-angle to her old course. Some boats sail higher than this and some not so high. This is four points off the wind, as each point of the compass is $11\frac{1}{4}°$ and four times eleven-and-a-quarter is forty-five. So that when to this is added the 45° you go from the wind on the other tack you make the angle of 90°.

Most people only remember Henry VIII by the number of his wives — considered a lot in those days for a well-known man; but he was one of the most wonderful kings we ever had; he built forts round our coasts, made cannons which excelled any other nation's and gave us the finest navy we have ever had or shall have in the whole of our history. He

Close Hauled



With the wind North you can sail Nor. West on the starboard and Nor. East on the port tack. With the wind abeam the seas pass under your vessel easily and squarely, but with the wind on the quarter they try to twist her so the steersman must be alert and even more attentive running dead.

caused ships to be so improved that they sailed within five points of the wind — only one point more than our present-day sailing vessels; a wonderful feat.

It was the fleet, seamen, cannon and guns of Henry VIII that enabled his daughter, Queen Elizabeth I, to defeat the Spanish Armada, for combined with this was the fact that the Spanish Armada arrived here at the end of July, just when our south-west monsoon was setting in, as it does even to this day. This was the reason why Drake, although he had news of the Spaniards a long way down Channel, wisely waited and finished his game of bowls, for all he wanted to do was to leave Plymouth in time to be at its entrance to defend it from attack and then, once the Spaniards had gone by, to sail to and fro across their sterns so that he could bombard them with his long-range cannons safely out of their shot and

in the weather berth. For though he was reinforced by a fleet when he reached the Isle of Wight, it was not until he arrived off Dover and the fleet waiting there to defend London joined them, that our ships were equal in numbers to the Spanish and could go into battle sure of success. After this the Spaniards were in no state to sail down channel against the westerly winds, and so went north round Scotland, only a quarter of them getting home.

From this we see that there is no change in the wind or weather throughout the ages in spite of the effect of wireless waves and atom bombs.

Because we are going into the wind we now haul our sails as flat and as near to the centre line of our vessel as she can bear them, and here again ships are like women. Some like being squeezed and pinched, and on no other point of sailing is a boat more touchy than in going to windward; the least thing will put her off. And again like women some boats are more ardent and all the time wish to climb and climb into the wind. First of all you haul in your jib, the foremost sail, that is cutting through clear air until it is flat as the vessel can stand; then you trim all your other sails from forward aft, so that they all lift together. Once they are all perfectly married you start driving to windward, taking advantage of every freeing puff and bearing away when the wind heads you, without touching the trim of the sails as you did when reaching, because now you are trying to go as high into the wind as possible. Having trimmed your sails to perfection, you now change the direction of your vessel to every little shift of the wind.

Once you have her going exactly as you wish and have the feel of her, you can try hauling in, or easing the jib and the other sails to suit, to see if she will point any higher without losing speed, or if by taking her slightly away from the wind and gaining more speed. you can increase your overall gain into the wind. Quite soon you will settle down to the trim of sheets and to the distance your vessel wants to be from the wind.

You must not be deceived by the fuss the boat makes through the water, and must always remember that when the boat is upright she presents 100% of her sail area to the wind and there is 100% of her draught to stop her drift to leeward. But when she heels to 45° you have lost 50% of your sail area and mast height, your driving power, and you have also, under water and unseen, lost 50% of your draught and lateral resistance, which prevents you sliding to leeward. Though, heeling over like this, the boat makes a lot of splash and fuss you must not let this deceive you, any more than you would the blustering of a bully; for not only has she lost 50%

of her virtues through heeling, but she has also distorted her lines, those on her leeside being now very coarse while those on the weather side very fine. This makes the boat carry a lot of weather helm, and so the rudder you have across her to hold her out of the wind is acting like a brake upon her, which means that while all the forces are slowing your vessel down, all the extra fuss is deceiving you into thinking she is going fast.

Quite soon, within ten minutes of sailing, you will get the feel and hang of your boat and notice the speed and flow of the water past her (actually it is your vessel passing through the water, though it always feels as though the water is flowing past the ship). You will observe that as you squeeze her high in the wind, to make more to weather, the vessel slows up. The art of taking the vessel to windward is to take her as high as sensible into the wind and yet still keep her travelling at a good clip.

When the wind breathes harder in the squalls you have more power than you need. Then if you are skilful you can squeeze her up a quarter or even half a point through the squalls and spill a great deal of unwanted wind out of the sails, and still keep her footing as fast as before but much higher on to the wind. This is where the good helmsman shines, for once anyone has sailed for a matter of eight hours he can steer as well as the next man, but the good steersman is one who takes advantage of every little change in wind and weather and in so doing gains seconds and minutes on those who do not even see and sense a change in the wind's direction or strength. There is a saying that opportunity makes a man — it does not, for some do not even see the opportunity: it only reveals the man.

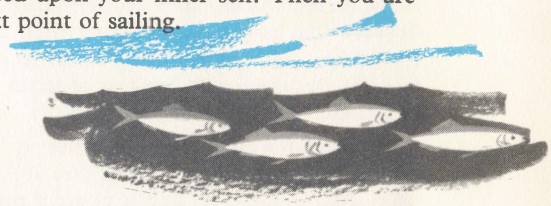
At certain times you must go from one tack to the other, and to do this you should call out 'Ready about' and your crew reply 'Ready about' when they are ready. Then you call 'Lee-oh' as you put the helm a-lee (but never more than forty-five degrees from the centre line, because the boat cannot follow any quicker than this) and you swing your boat up into the wind across it and the sails fall on the other side, and the head sails trimmed. Generally, as the mainsail is on a horse or slide, this needs no tending in going about. Now you start sailing with the wind on your other hand and the tiller in your other hand.

Many young steersmen come to me and say that their boat does not go so well on the starboard tack as on the port tack. I ask them if they are left or right-handed and invariably these people are right-handed, and therein is the answer, for when on the starboard tack, and sitting to windward as they should, they have the tiller in their

left hand and they have not been sailing long enough to get this left hand as perfect as their right naturally is.

Always when going to windward you should watch the luff of your foremast sail, the sail that is cutting into the cleanest wind, undeflected by any other sail. Directly this shivers and shakes on its luff, you should bear away a little to fill it. Then every twenty-five to fifty yards let her come up into the wind until this sail shivers, taking her off again just enough to fill the sail. So you never miss a favourable shift in the wind.

Now having had an hour of reaching, and an hour of going to windward, you should end your first lesson in sailing. You cannot absorb too much at one sitting, and it is best to come ashore, drink eat and sleep, and think upon what you have been doing. Possibly next day go out and do it all over again, each thing for about a quarter-of-an-hour instead of an hour, to ensure that the lessons learnt are properly impressed upon your inner self. Then you are ready to start upon the next point of sailing.



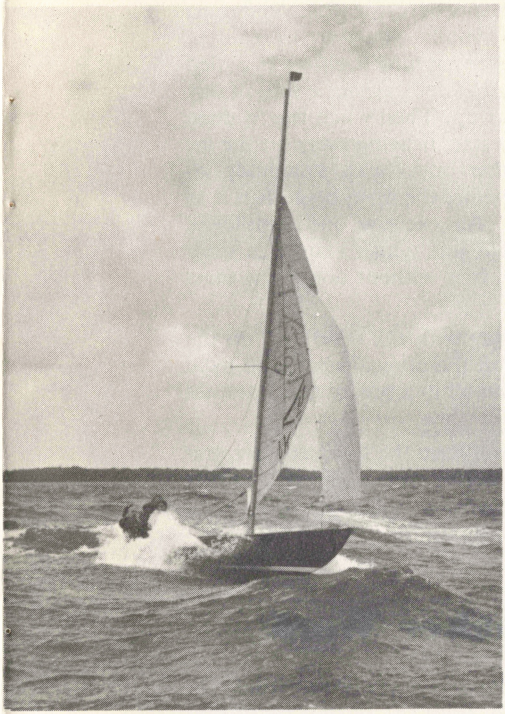
Broad Reaching

BROAD REACHING with the wind well out towards your tail, your bow is about 135° from the wind. Here, as in reaching with the wind abeam, you ease off the leading sail until it flutters on its luff and then haul it back again till it is asleep. Then you trim your mainsail and other sails exactly the same, so that you have all sails off to the limit when they are exerting their greatest effort forward with a minimum of heeling power. And so you chase away on your course.

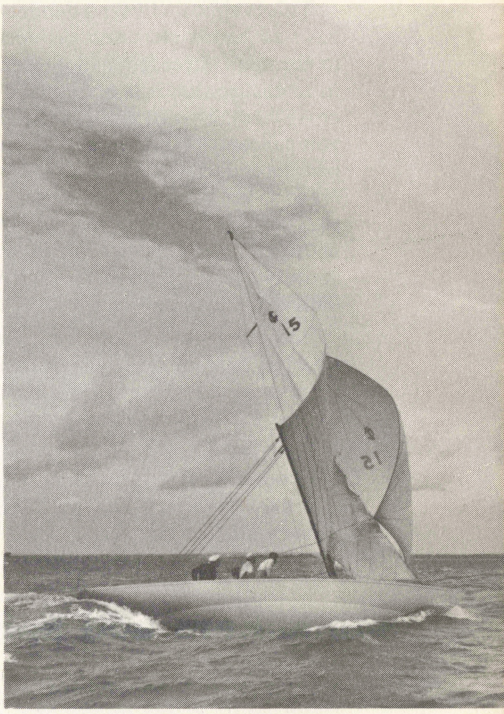
Here you will notice that although when you were reaching the boat she tended to fly straight and true, now she does not. For as each wave, no matter how small, lifts the bow this tends to fall off to leeward, and then as this wave passes aft under her stern the bow digs in and tends to gripe and luff up into the wind. The good steersman anticipates this and by applying firm but not excessive helm before it happens, saves a great deal of rudder work; for once the boat starts griping into the wind a great deal of force and power must be applied through the tiller to the rudder to stop this. So when chasing away with the wind on the quarter you must watch every wave and anticipate the boat's movement, keeping her on course with the minimum amount of rudder and tiller.

When sailing with the wind forward of the beam, such as when sailing close-hauled, we change from one tack to the other by going head to wind through the wind that way. But now, with the wind well aft, to go from one tack to the other we do the reverse — we bear away

from the wind, changing the wind across the stern and not across the bow. The first is called tacking; this is called gybing. Gybing is more dangerous than tacking (and is the reason why this is the third and next-to-last lesson): for whereas when tacking the sails are head-to-wind, with no power in them when they go across from one side to the other, when gybing they are fully loaded with wind and like dynamite, dangerous. Many and many a vessel has been dismasted on this point of sailing. So now you are about to execute one of the most dangerous of sailing manoeuvres.



Reaching Wind Well Aft



Gybing

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TO GYBE, you run your boat away more and more before the wind until the wind is dead astern. Even now your sails will not go across, and you must continue to swing until the wind comes on the other side and then, with a swish and a bang, first the headsail, then the mainsail, fly across the vessel. The other helm must be applied quickly and firmly, or the vessel will run on up into the wind until she is abeam and, in strong winds, knocked flat.

Before you execute this manoeuvre you call out to all hands 'Stand by for a gybe' and they reply 'Ready' when they are ready. Then you call out "Gybe-oh' and you start changing the wind across your stern from one side to the other, keeping an eye on the crew. For the helmsman is generally well aft and, having the full length of his ship to look at, can see what each member of the crew is up to; for if you have running backstays these must be let go on the one side and taken up on the other in the twinkling of an eye, as the boom goes over suddenly with a crash.

This is almost always a dangerous manoeuvre, for which you must have all hands alert and on deck. Generally, you start by hauling in the main sheet fairly taut, then the lee running backstay is pulled in to ensure that it is not caught in any other rigging or foul of any cross-trees. It is in fact three parts set up. Then when this is done you call out 'Gybe-oh' and the chaps start heaving away on the lee backstays (which will become weather ones) with somebody all ready to let go the weather backstay before the main boom hits it as she swings over on the new gybe. An exciting and wonderful manoeuvre when well carried out, but one which results in utter chaos when not performed perfectly. It is without doubt the most dangerous manoeuvre of all.

So you spend an hour reaching away with the wind well on the quarter, first on one gybe and then on the other, learning to gybe your vessel correctly and properly, and all in a breeze that does not exceed 12 to 15 miles an hour.

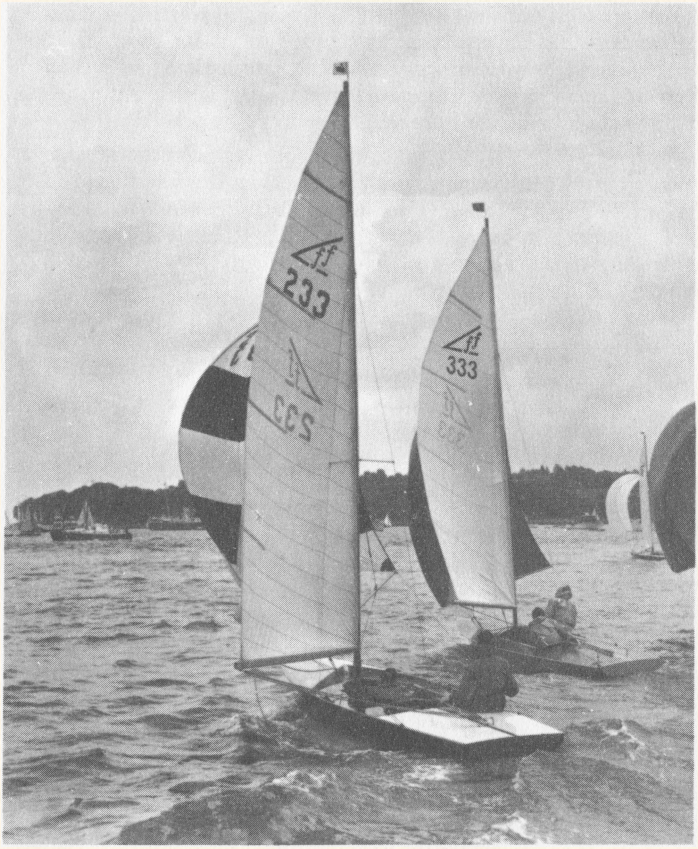
Generally on this point of sailing you have the spinnaker set, but I do not advocate this for your early sailing days. However, so that you may have a little idea of what spinnaker work means, here are a few words on the subject.

Spinnakers and Spinnaker Work

BECAUSE once the vessel starts chasing away before the wind and lessening its power by her own speed, from the earliest times seamen have set extra sail area to try and keep up the total pressure, even though they have diminished the wind's pressure. The old square-riggers scudding away before the wind set stunsails by using long, light spars, out through iron hoops on the ends of the yardarms, and these stunsails increased the area enormously. Today, instead of a stunsail boom, we put out a spinnaker boom on the opposite side of the mainsail, and then set a great balloon of a sail flying from the end of this to the masthead. So with a sheet round the forestay and in on deck, this sail is set and controlled from three points only, and, as its area is often more than that of the mainsail and all other sails together, it is a sail to set and use only when you are expert and even then you can have great trouble with it. It is

in fact the most troublesome as well as the most rewarding sail of all to set. But in most cases, once it is up it literally takes charge of the vessel inasmuch as a small child or an invalid takes charge of a house. Therefore you must never set this sail in enclosed waters or where the navigation is tricky unless you really have to and unless you are expert, otherwise you are bound to get into trouble. That is why the spinnaker does not form a part of this book, for when you are able to set and handle it you will have outgrown these early lessons.

Running Dead Before the Wind

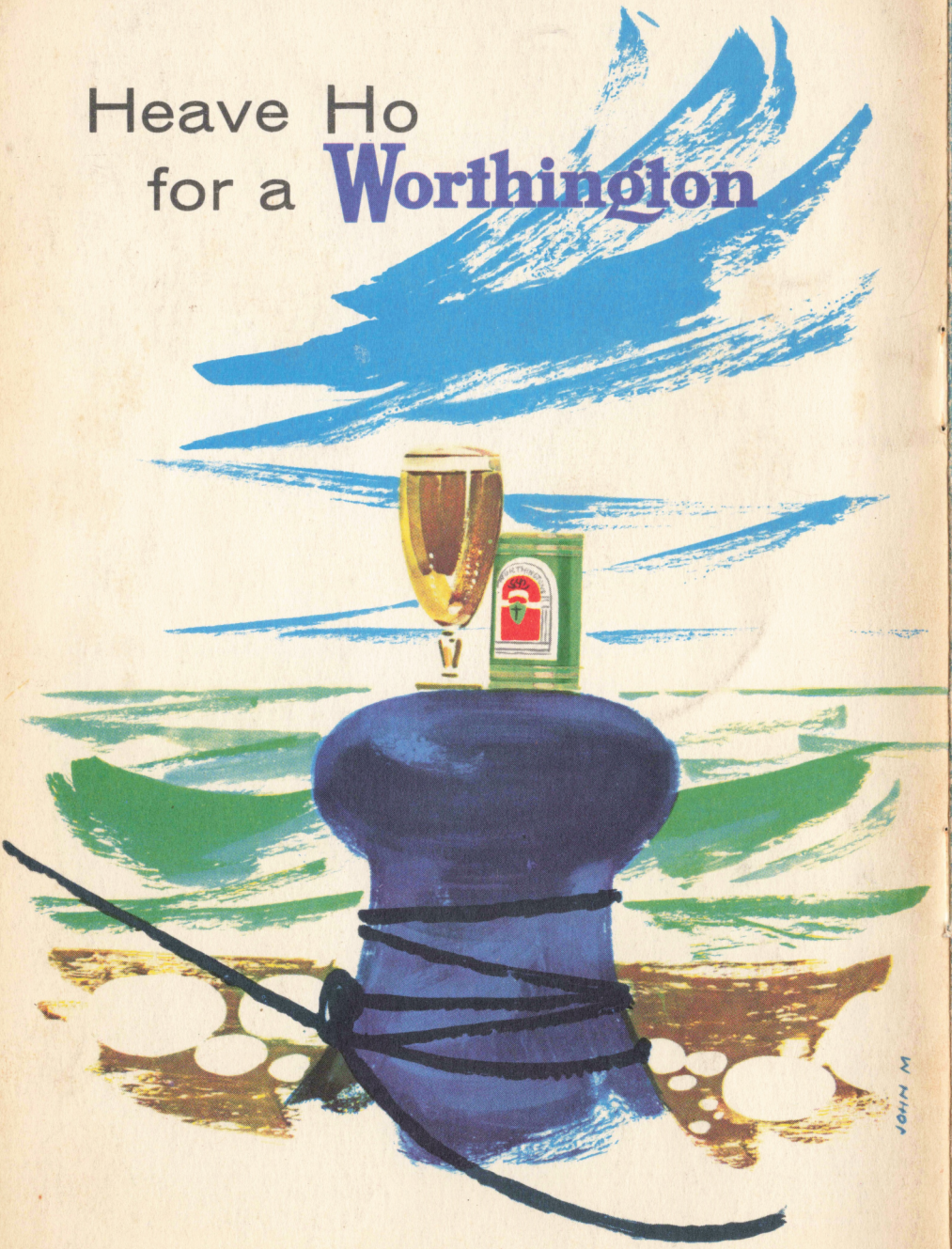


HERE, because it is on the point of a gybe, is your fourth and final lesson, and again you should do this in a wind not exceeding 15 miles an hour.

You will notice, when you are running dead before the wind, that your vessel tries to yaw to and fro, because as the waves pass under her they try to deflect her from her course. You must be firm with the tiller, and keep her flying dead before the wind by watching her bows swinging on the sky or on the land ahead, for on this point of sailing a small variation in the course by yawing can bring about a gybe unexpectedly, and when no one is ready this is dangerous. So you chase away from the wind all alert, feeling its direction on your ears either side. (It is no good ever looking at the flag aloft, for people who steer by a flag will never become good seamen. On this point of sailing, as your mast swings to and fro, making an arc in the sky, it causes the flag to stream out first one side and then the other; so it can never guide you). You also watch the wind on the water — its waves are always square to its direction. It is the wind waves that you watch, and though sometimes in a tideway these are mere ripples, compared to the waves caused by the run of tide over a bank, they are still there to guide you.

Another reason why you must mind your boat and the wind carefully is that when running you are lessening the wind's speed by the speed of your vessel. This means that the wind aft is always stronger than it appears to be, which tends to lull you into a sense of dreamy composure out of which you can soon be jolted by a sudden and unexpected gybe.

Heave Ho
for a **Worthington**



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